

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) on Thursday called the city of Milwaukee a "poor steward of our environment" after the accidental dumping of sewage into Lake Michigan by a Milwaukee sewage treatment.

About 800,000 gallons of sewage were sent into Lake Michigan following a mishap at the Jones Island Water Treatment Plant in Milwaukee on Wednesday.

Bill Graffin of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District says the problem occurred as the facility tested a new computer operating system.

Kirk said Thursday: "Milwaukee's massive sewage dumping into Lake Michigan shows that city is a poor steward of our environment. We should find ways to upgrade Milwaukee's sewage system in the short run. I am also preparing federal legislation to set a date to ban all dumping in the Great Lakes."

Heavy rains in May 2004 led the city of Milwaukee to discharge 1.7 billion gallons of untreated sewage into Lake Michigan. That led to criticism from both Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Kirk, who called the sewage, "Cheesehead sewer water."

Authorities have said it may take several days to determine if the latest discharge violated pollution standards.